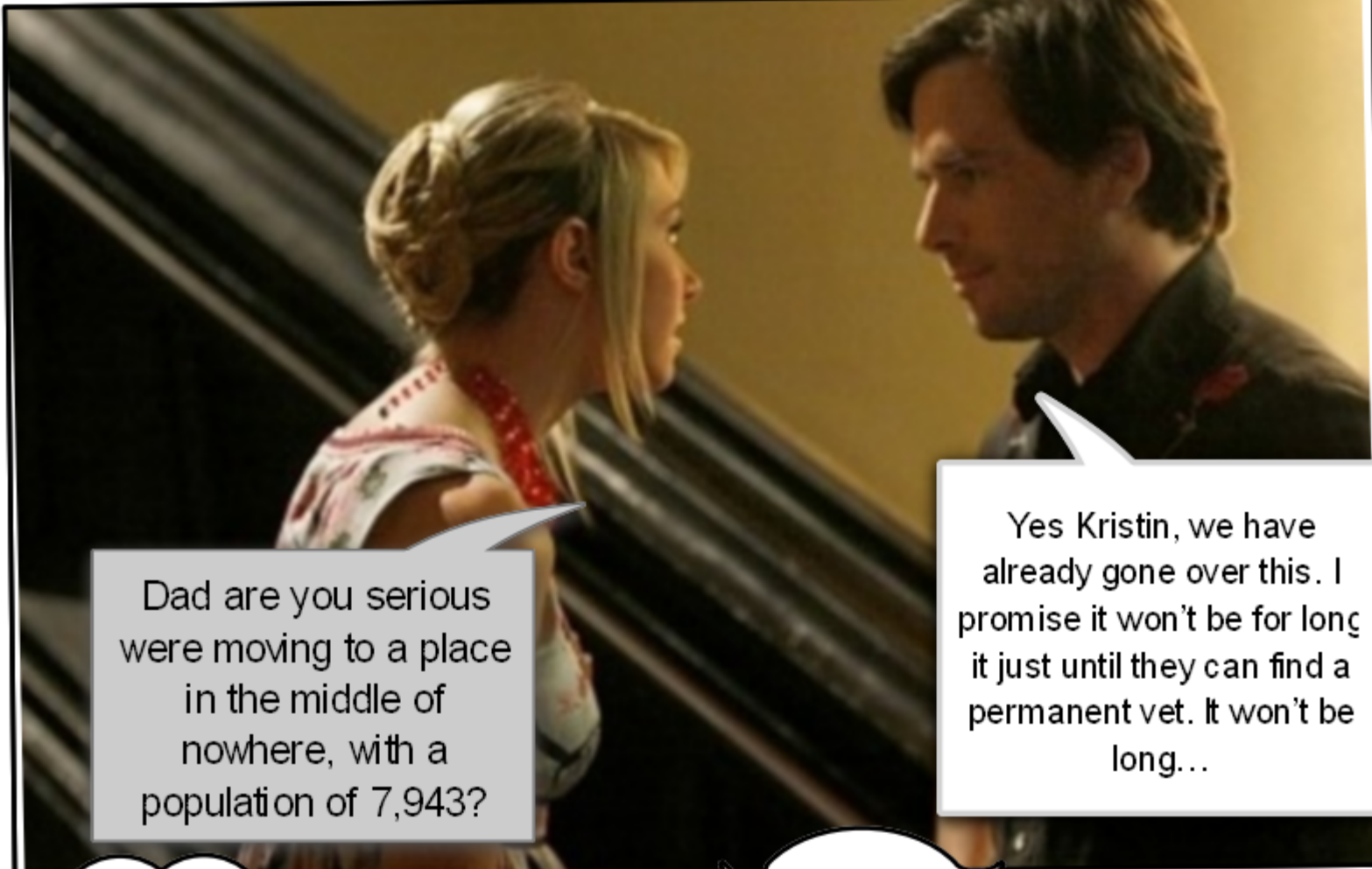






# DIRT COUNTY'S LITTLE ANGEL

BY: MARY HARDIN RATHEL



Dad are you serious  
were moving to a place  
in the middle of  
nowhere, with a  
population of 7,943?

Yes Kristin, we have  
already gone over this. I  
promise it won't be for long  
it just until they can find a  
permanent vet. It won't be  
long...

Sure.... I mean I  
thought you were  
just kidding but...  
wow 7,943 people?

Wow, as if that  
makes a  
difference.



Soon to  
be 7,946  
people.





Everything will be just fine. I mean, hey who knows we might fall in love with Dry County.



Sure.

Okay,  
everything's  
loaded lets  
go!

No no NO! Urg... Is  
this actually  
happening to me?



I have lived in a large town my whole life. I've be known to be a little odd, because I was never the one who had designer tags, or a lot of money. But hey they never really knew me too well so it's cool. I guess now going to a new town I'll find some popularity. Ahaha. Me being popular, the head cheerleader, homecoming queen, and the quarterback's girl. Like that would ever happen. I hope there is a new start in Dry County, or someone who will change the way i look at things.





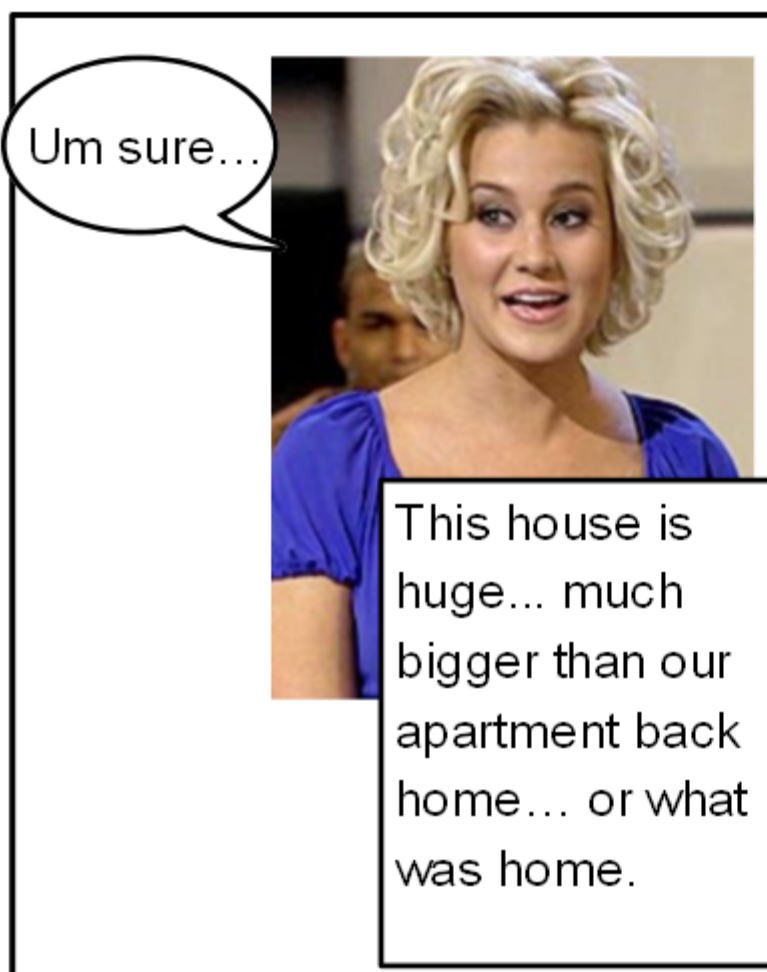
Okay we're here!

Kristin get up.  
Come on.  
Wake up!



What.....

Were here hunny. Do you want to see your room?




Um sure...

This house is huge... much bigger than our apartment back home... or what was home.



Well here it is. Do you like it?

A photograph of a bedroom with warm, orange-toned walls and a wooden floor. A large, dark wood four-poster bed is the central feature, covered with a dark red blanket and several pillows, including a large pink one. A chandelier hangs from the ceiling, and a window to the left is framed by bright red curtains. A small lamp sits on a nightstand next to the bed. In the foreground, a large, light-colored ottoman sits on the floor.

Wow I am amazed. Is this like the biggest room in the house? What! My own bathroom you're joking.

Well ever room in the house has its own bathroom but your mom and I decided since it's a change for you, you deserver the bigger room.



I love it thank you  
so... Much!



Kristin come outside you  
need to help us with the a  
few more boxes.

Urg... I'll be  
right down!



So where are  
those boxes?

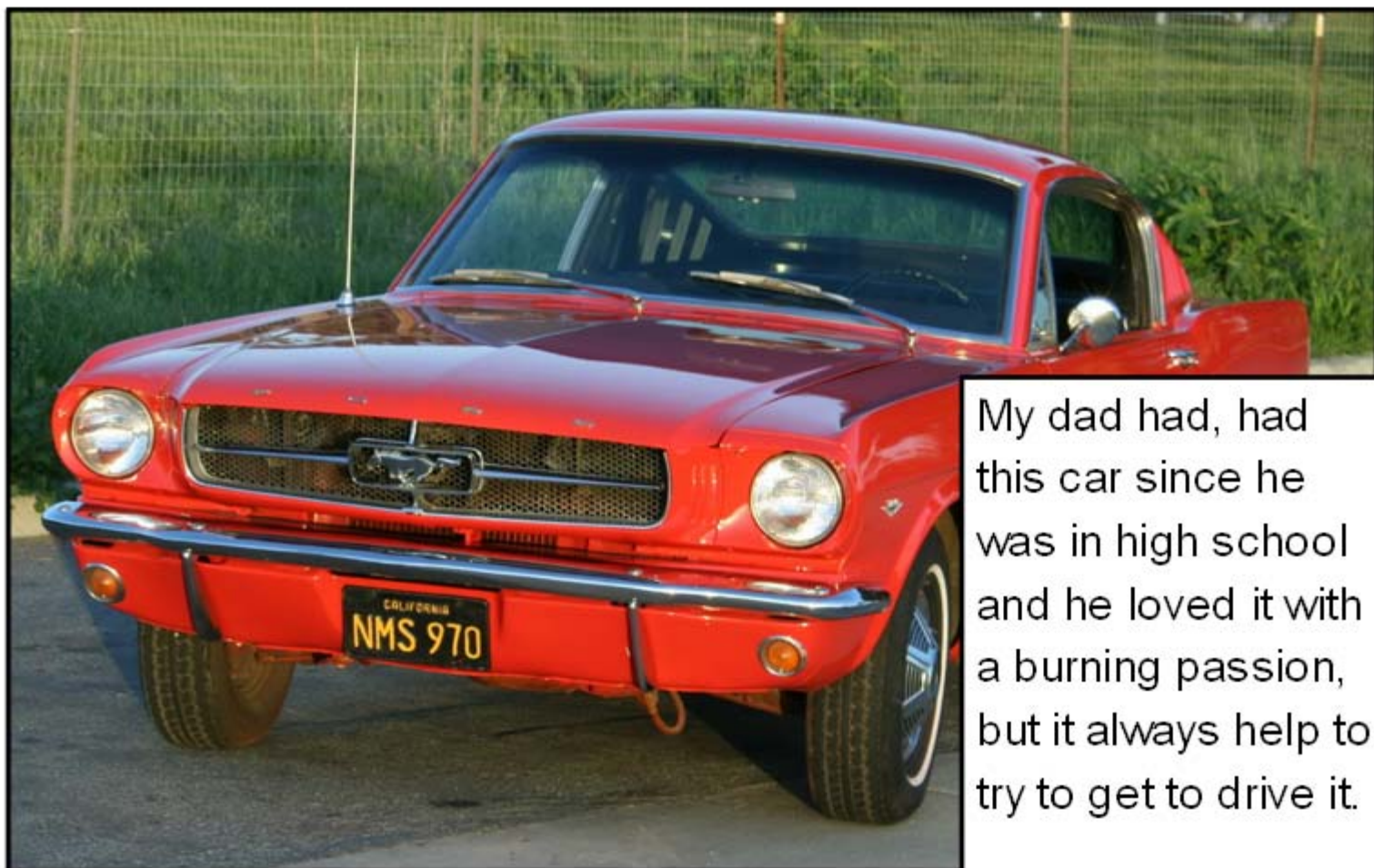


Oh its okay I got all the rest of  
them. Kristin can you do me a  
favor and go to the grocery and  
pick up some food for the week.



Um... well can  
I take the old  
mustang





My dad had, had this car since he was in high school and he loved it with a burning passion, but it always help to try to get to drive it.

Um... Well...  
N... Sure. Why not?



Thank you daddy.

Oh, and get some hamburgers for supper.



Okay.



It would have probably been a good idea to get direction before I went, but I'm getting to ride around the town. I think I've already figured most of this place out. So far its all been the same, there are a few trees here and there and then there is small houses in a type of sq... wait this is like a park. Wow they have these here. And what is the town strip? Town Strip?... Town Strip! Where a grocery store would be! Finally!

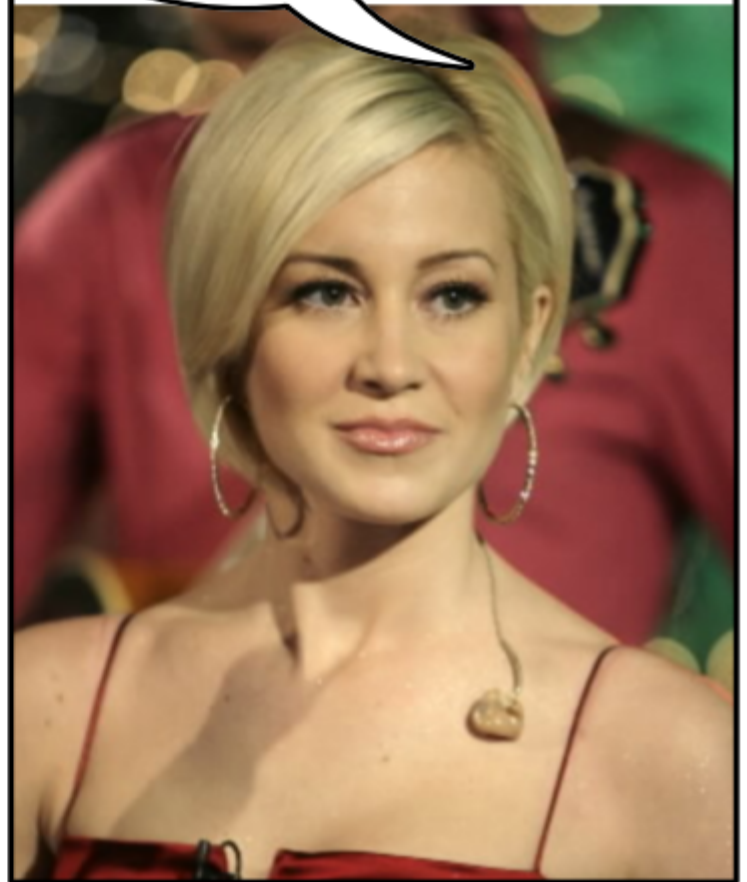
**BRING  
BRING**



Well hello there,  
how may I  
assist you.



Um no thanks, but  
thank you for  
offering though.



Well if y... Oh my!  
You're the new girl in  
town, right? Kristin  
Cobbs?



Um yeah. Huh...  
how do you know  
my name?



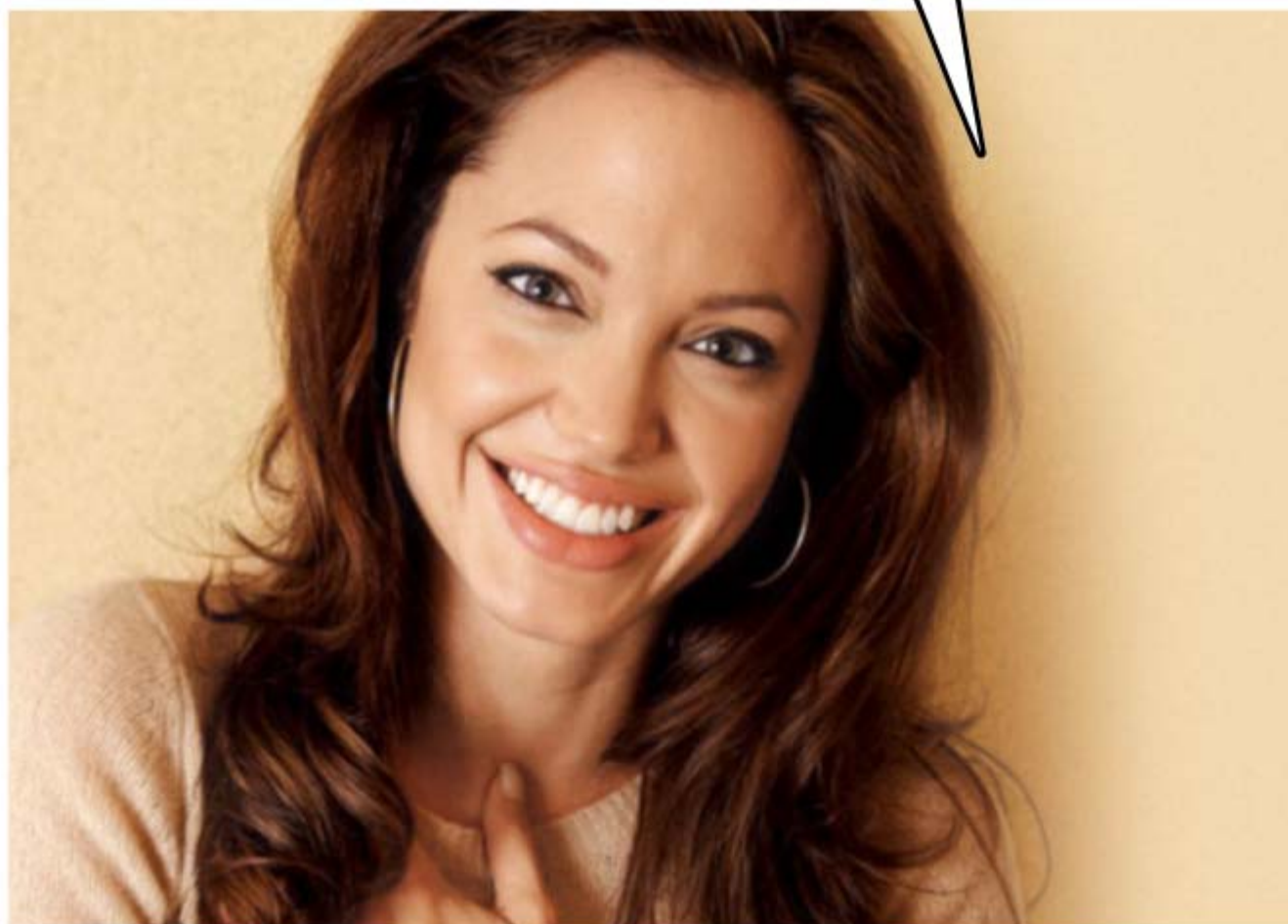
Oh well hunny you're the talk of Dirt  
County. Oh I'm so rude, I am Catherine  
Webb, and I have a daughter that going  
to be going to high school with you. You  
are going to be a junior, right?





Um... Yes  
ma'm.

Well Ellie is only a sophomore but im sure you and she will  
be great friends. You know what let me get you number and I  
can give to her and you and some other girls can get  
together. So, you will know somebody being the new girl



Um... Okay  
Two Eight  
Four.....

Good afternoon, Catherine. How has  
work been t...? Oh I'm so sorry did I  
interrupt you two from something.

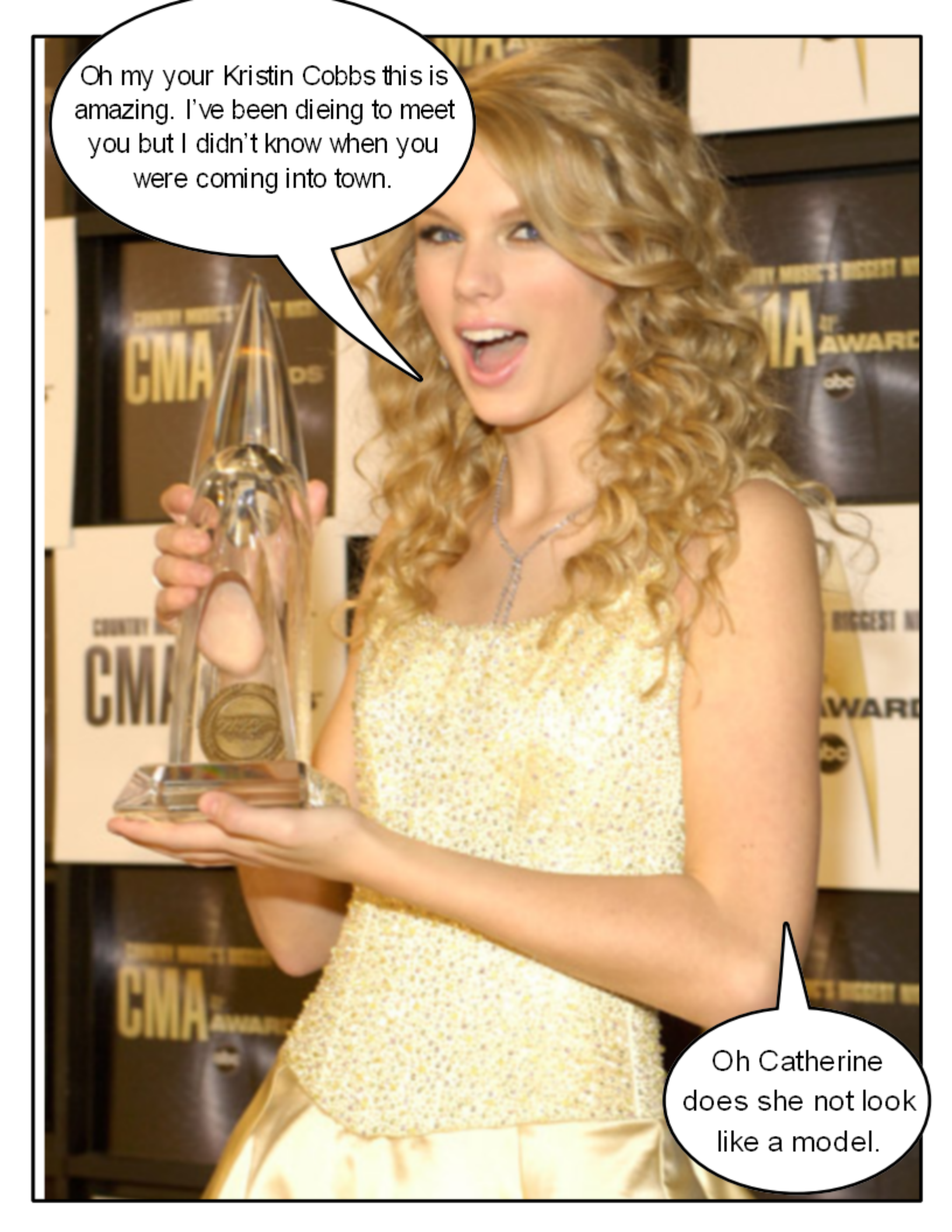
ANN  
DRIVING



Oh no Oz I was just  
getting our new  
neighbors number.





A photograph of Taylor Swift with long, wavy blonde hair, wearing a yellow sequined dress and a necklace. She is holding a large, clear glass CMA award trophy with both hands. The background features a repeating pattern of 'CMA AWARDS' logos. Two speech bubbles are overlaid on the image.

Oh my your Kristin Cobbs this is amazing. I've been dieing to meet you but I didn't know when you were coming into town.

Oh Catherine does she not look like a model.



Oh, why yes she does. I was just telling her about how Ellie and her should meet up and get to know each other. You should join them.



We could take her out on a tour during the day then go dance at the dance hall at night

That's a great Idea.  
What do you think  
Kristin?



Um... Sounds good but I still have to unpack



Oh, I can help you and speed up the process. Do you think Ellie would like to help? Sure... she'd love too.



Um, I hate to ask this but can you point me in the direction of the hamburger meat



Oh my I almost forgot that you're a shopper. Um, aisle nine.







Thanks.



That was different. I feel like a celebraty, or should I say model... what a joke. What kind of name is Oz anyway?



DING DONG



Hello I'm Ellie my mother told me you were the new girl intown and you needed help unpacking.



Um yeah there is a few more boxes.

Oz was going to come but she had to go help out with some community thing. If you didn't know she loves helping people./ Oh, my is this your room. Well its just wonder all the cute colors. You must fell lucky huh?



Yeah... Its much bigger than my old house.



Funny name to you, huh? Well she likes to help everybody and it turned out there was help needed at the rescue mission. But you'll get used to her disappearing like this.



Now where are those boxes?



Right here, so what exactly is Oz... doing?

Oh, so does she like to do a lot of community work and stuff?





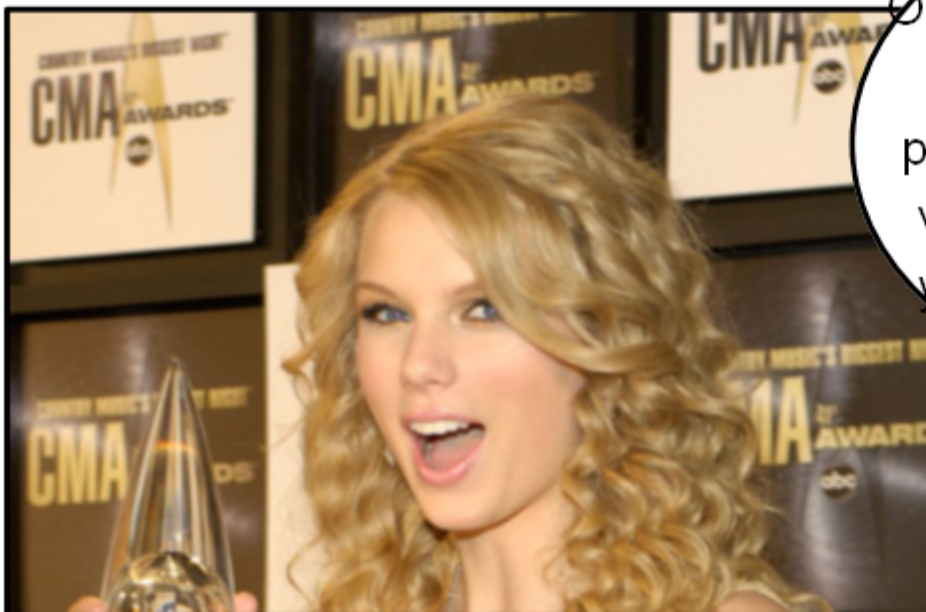


Yeah, she told me to tell you that she was sorry about not being able to come today but nothing is stopping her from going out tomorrow on a town tour.....

Oz and Ellie told me to meet them at the town park on the third bench on the path, and that where we would start our tour. We ventured high and low of the small town, but I was too distracted by Oz to pay attention. Oz knew every name to every person we walked by. It drove me crazy how she was so perfect; she walked like she was dancing on rain. Well that how it was until we actually made it to the Dance Hall.



Oh I'm so excited! You'll get to meet so many people and all the boys will love to dance with your pretty self. Ha-ha



Um, sure. Please just  
don't try to set me up  
to dance with anyone.

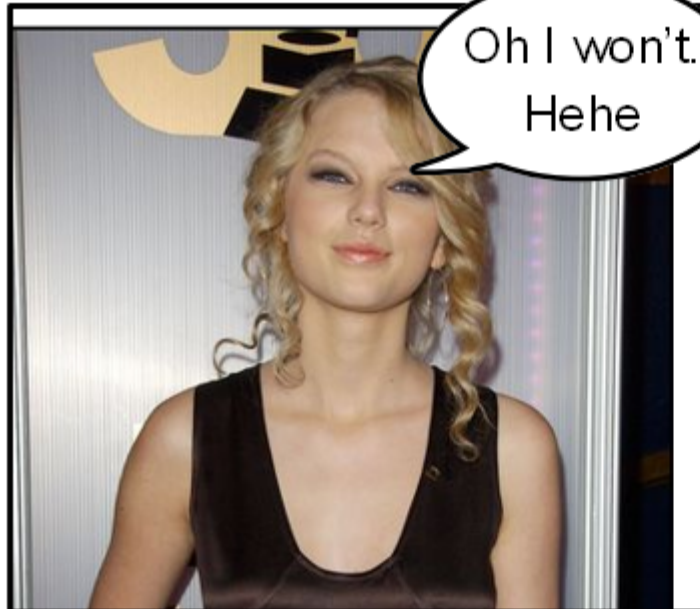
Yeah Oz, we don't  
want to  
embarrass her.



Where is she  
going? To find a  
partner?

8

Oh I won't.  
Hehe



Oh, my who  
is that?

That's actually my  
grandfather  
hahahahaha.



Wow.....



The months in this new town have gone by so fast... I'm already in my third month of Dirt County High school, and I've already found friends and foes. I love Ellie but urg... Oz is to perfect. It's seems like her parents let her do what ever she wants and she such a goodie-two-shoes. I've got into it once or twice with her and people look at me like I just shot someone. She puts on a fake puppy face and tells me I'm just having a bad day. Well, no I'm not I just can't stand the fact of how perfect you think you are Oz... She told me to come to her house this Friday and Ellie is making me go... says it's important

Oh Kristin I'm so glad you made it to my house!

Um well sort of... I fell like you don't like me and I thought maybe if you get to know a little bit about me it will help you understand me more.

Um, yeah it's important right

Okay, but I don't really think your going to change my



Well let me have at it. Now  
I'm going to get personal  
so don't think I'm making  
this up as a joke.



Okay



Well, it all started when I was around five. My mom grew up in this town. When she had the option to go to a college she took a leap, and went on to Ole Miss. There she met Tom, my father. Well he had a degree and had money so mom dropped out and got married and a year latter had me. Mom wanted to live here, so we stayed here until I was five and dad still hated it. So we moved to Fayetteville, Arkansas. He started to change, mom suspected him of cheating and that made him angry. He hurt her and it hurt me because I had to sit there and see her get her. Well the night we discovered she was pregnant with a baby boy it was my birthday. Two weeks later my mother was killed. He said it was an accident but it was obvious that he meant to push her off the banister. So now he is in jail for life in Arkansas and I live with my grandmother here. I choose to be everything I am because of what happened. So if you think I'm perfect you've got it all wrong. My mother hadn't originally named me Oz. She named me that when she was started to know that I was soon going to be alone. My name mean strength and courage it tells me everyday to make her proud and I'm going to keep doing so....



What you just gave me was a load full, how I am I going to take this in. I've never heard anything like this. What would I say?



You can leave I know that is a lot to take in I'll just see you later.

Okay...



So, you finally know the story of Dirt County's Little Angel.



I'm so confused.



I know... come on lets go.

